

THE
SOCIAL POSITION
OF THE
MEDICAL PROFESSION:
WITH SUGGESTIONS.

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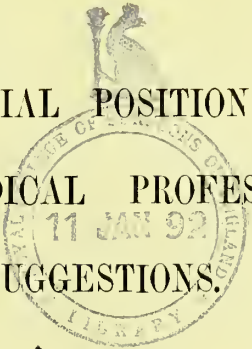
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THE SOCIAL POSITION OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, WITH SUGGESTIONS.

GENTLEMEN,—Members of the Birmingham and Midland Counties Branch of the British Medical Association,—

My first duty is to offer to you my most sincere and heartfelt thanks for electing me to the honourable position in which I find myself to-day. I cannot for one moment consider myself worthy of the position which has been so well filled by many illustrious and well-known men. I can only suppose that the accident of my coming from a portion of the district, which has not always been well represented upon this Branch, together with the fact that this year it is the turn of a country member to be President, has brought about my election, and I must trust to you for great indulgence and for lenient criticism. In the Midland Counties, no man can aspire to a greater honour than to become President of this great Branch,—one of the largest of our whole Association. The great value of our Association, and of its Branches, needs no comment of mine, but I may be allowed to point out how greatly the facilities for meeting, and for interchange of ideas, are brought within the reach of all of us, by the operations of our Association and its Branches; and how much this must be an advantage not only to us, but to the public at large.

The history of our Branch during the last year has been singularly uneventful. You have had in the report of the Council, and of the Sections, a record of the work which has been done. It has been said that that State is well governed which has no history, and in this sense, it may be said that our Branch has been well governed during the past year. This Branch has recorded its thanks to our late President. But I cannot refrain from stating how greatly I think his year of office has conduced to the popularity and to the efficiency of the Branch; while, at the same time, a name which is so well known, not only in Birmingham, but I may say in the civilized world, has reflected some

of its credit and its glory upon this Branch. I congratulate the town of Birmingham, and particularly the Birmingham Midland Counties Branch of the British Medical Association, on the living presence and membership of Mr Lawson Tait. In recording the history of the Branch, I should have neglected my duty had I said less, while, in his presence, I know I shall give offence if I say more.

We have lost during the past year but few of our members by death or removal. Those of us who are pretty constant in our attendance must deeply regret the death of Mr George Yates, who died at Leamington on April 2nd, aged 66. Mr Yates was a pupil of Mr Alfred Baker's, at the Birmingham General Hospital, and from that time until his death was an earnest worker. He obtained the diplomas of M.R.C.S. and L.S.A. in 1844; he was a member of the Paris Medical Society, and he became a resident surgeon at the Bedford General Infirmary. Afterwards, he was hon. surgeon to the Birmingham General Dispensary, and he contributed papers of great interest to the *Dublin Quarterly* and *Midland Quarterly Journals*. He read many papers to local Medical Societies, and will be well remembered as a constant debater at their meetings. He was a good classical scholar, and he has ended a long professional career generally esteemed by his professional brethren as a true friend, and an honest gentleman.

I have remarked that the attendance at the meetings of the Branch has been smaller than it used to be. Perhaps the fact that the Midland Medical Society which meets the day before, and which has become so popular, to some extent accounts for this, but I would suggest to country members that nothing will be lost to them by submitting to the little inconvenience which attending these meetings may occasion them, when they think of the great gain which is possible, not only in the interchange of ideas, but in the pleasant meeting of friends, whom otherwise it would be possible that they would not see except at much longer intervals.

And now, having disposed of our history during the past year, as well as having noticed the deaths of those who have been taken from our midst, I wish to announce that it is my intention to make my address on the present occasion a short one. I do this for several reasons. First, because I have neither the time nor the ability to make a long address sufficiently interesting. Secondly, because I have observed on former occasions that the address coming after a considerable amount of formal business, has, when a long one, wearied the members, and has not been conducive to that happy frame of mind and body which should always exist among those who are about to entertain one another at the convivial board.

I have taken for the subject of my address, one which has

interested me for a considerable time. It is "The Social Position of the Medical Profession in this country at the present time." In contrasting the position which is held by the Medical Profession in social estimation, with that of the other learned professions, I think it will be admitted that we do not stand so high as either the Bar or the Church. Yet the attainments of the members of our profession, their character, their self-denial, and their public services are acknowledged on all hands, and should command for them a respect as high as that in which any other profession is held. In former times, it seems as though the great consulting physician was held by all classes in greater respect than he is at present. Even as far back as the days of Homer, Machaon, the army surgeon of the Greeks, was spoken of in the following terms:—

Ἰητροὺς γὰρ ἀνὴρ πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων

which Pope has rendered thus:—

"A wise physician, skilled our wounds to heal,
Is more than armies to the public weal."

It is undoubted that the rank and file of the Profession are now held in much greater respect than they were in any previous portion of our history. I suppose this is to some extent explained by the fact that Medical education, such as it was in former times, was almost exclusively confined to the higher ranks in the Profession. In the present day, the education of the Medical man is pretty much the same for all ranks; *i.e.*, his professional education; and the marked difference which formerly existed, is no longer found. For the convenience of the public, as well as for our own, our Profession may be considered to be divided into the following ranks: the pure consultant, the specialist, and the general practitioner. No formal division of these ranks has ever been made by law, and can be hardly said to be sanctioned by custom. And yet I think that such a division is pretty clearly recognised within the Profession itself, and it would be better if the public could be induced to more clearly recognise the convenience of these distinctions. Not that there is any difference, except that of accident, between many of those who are acting in the different divisions of the Profession, for it often happens that the general practitioner is a more accomplished man in many branches of his art than the specialist to whose assistance he frequently resorts, while it certainly is the case that many of those who fill the rank of consultants, are able to do so from the fact that they have started in the race of life under greater pecuniary advantages than their fellows. Still, I think that the recognition of the public of these divisions, will, in many instances, assist to elevate the social consideration in which

the Profession is held. Quite recently, we have been taught to separate the people of this nation into two great divisions,—“the Classes” and “the Masses.” The confidence which is bestowed upon the Medical Profession comes in equal proportions from both, while the rewards of public service which are at the disposal of the first, are mainly withheld from our Profession. Much of the restraining and disabling legislation which has afflicted us, comes from that class of the community which has more to do with the making of laws than the other; and it is certainly true, that the estimation of our profession is lower in the minds of the “classes” than in the minds of the “masses.” But while we may justly complain of this, we must not be wholly blind to the fact that even in the “masses,” there is, with regard to our profession, a jealousy of its privileges, and a constant and increasing desire to obtain our services for inadequate remuneration. Why is it that so many of the more educated classes of this country are found supporting antivivisection crazes, rebellion against vaccination laws, outrageous quackery of all kinds? And the answer is that it arises from ignorance and conceit, and is a part of that universal fight which has at all times, and will to all time, go on between light and darkness. The support which is accorded to quackery must be well known to most of us; the fortunes which have been made by quack medicines, by medical rubbings, by applications of electricity in all its various forms, by such delusions as have been practised by Count Mattei, by bone setters, and by various other impostors, show us how utterly ignorant even the educated classes are of the first principles of physical science. On the other hand, the support which is extended to quackery by the least educated classes, is due to some extent to their jealousy of our so-called privileges.

But to sum up, I may say that the general low estimation in which our profession is held is very largely due to the before mentioned causes, but also very greatly to our own faults. And I shall now arrange our own faults under the following headings:

The first is,—Imperfect Preliminary Education.

The fact that anybody can become a registered medical student merely on having passed a second grade examination of the College of Preceptors, and that anyone between the ages of 16 and 17 years, can if they choose, drop for ever all learning except that which is specially set apart for the acquisition of professional knowledge, leads to the introduction into this profession of a very large number of men who, I do not hesitate to say, are more imperfectly educated in a general sense than the aspirants to any one of the other learned professions. And here, I may say that I think the entire abolition of the apprenticeship or pupilage system has been a mistake; for I cannot think it wise

that a boy should go straight from school into a life so full of manifold temptations as is that of a medical student. A year passed in the family of a medical man in large practice, would greatly widen the student's ideas, and add largely to his obtaining a truer conception of the duties he is about to undertake. Narrow though his education may be as compared to that of a medical man, it cannot be denied that the young jurate has a much better social position at the outset of his career, than the young physician or surgeon, while it is quite certain that the position of the young physician or surgeon is not comparable with that of the most junior member of the Bar. This, I believe, to be largely due to the more prolonged and complete preliminary education necessary for the Church and the Bar.

The second reason of the low estimation of our profession is, I think, the imperfect professional education which so large a proportion of our number receive, though I must admit that this is improving day by day. And yet, when one looks at the vast domain of medicine, one is lost in wonder as to how it is possible, in the short space of four years or less, to get anything like a concise knowledge of the subject into a young fellow's head.

The third reason that I shall give is,—Professional Quackery and Dishonesty. Those of us who have been any time in practice must be well aware that quackery is not to be found wholly outside the Profession. Perhaps it will be as well to define what I mean by "Professional Quackery." I should say then that a man who is constantly using new remedies without having taken sufficient trouble to ascertain their efficacy, and at the same time is unscrupulous in his disparagement of his professional brethren, is practising the two chief arts of the quack. Do we not all know the man who is constantly asseverating to his patients that but for his own special skill and attention the case must inevitably have gone to the bad?—the man who lavishes special attention upon servants in order to obtain the patronage of their masters and mistresses?—the man who carries about with him bags full of instruments of precision, the nature of which he carefully explains to the gaping friends?—and the man who is constantly prescribing remedies which no ordinary chemist can dispense because they have just been invented or just been brought over in three ships? If the art of the quack is, as I have said, to pretend to a knowledge which he does not possess, to be constantly disparaging the art of others, and to be using remedies whose utility is not proven or is at least mysterious—then we must admit that there is plenty of Quackery within our ranks. And do you think for one moment that an intelligent public does not see through this dishonesty?

My next cause is,—Professional Jealousy, and believe me, gentle-

men, this is one of the most potent causes for the low estimation in which our profession is held. I need go no further than the daily papers for the last six months "to point the moral and adorn the tale,"—to show what dire consequences arise in public estimation, when dirty professional linen is constantly washed in the public gaze. Does a man acquire an illustrious patient? his neglected rivals make little hesitation about disparaging him in public; and few of us indeed refrain from that which Pope so well expresses:

"Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike;
Just hint at fault, and hesitate dislike."

Does a man make a great success in professional life? it is seldom but that whispers are heard among his own compeers, that it is to luck and chance, and not to merit that he owes his advancement! If there is any great public cause before the world, in which Doctors are concerned, has it not passed into a proverb that you can get as many to take one side as you can to take the other? Our quarrels in law courts are such that any leading counsel will tell you that medical testimony is of little or no avail when anything like disputed points arise; and even when one of our less fortunate brethren makes a real mistake or a real social *faux pas*, it is common enough that his bitterest assailants are found within the ranks of his own profession. Is it possible that we can blind ourselves so far as to believe that these things are not supremely damaging to our social estimation?

The fifth cause of want of estimation on the part of the public is, I think, the exaggerated importance which we give to that which the public can never be got to understand, and which we call "professional etiquette." Professional etiquette is looked upon by the public with almost the same distrust and the same sense of mystery that they show towards the Mosaic law among the Jews, and I think this is largely owing to the exaggerated importance which we ourselves give to it. If we could once realize that the only basis of true professional etiquette is always, and on all occasions, to do towards our professional brother what we should like him to do towards us, were he in our place, we should then, I think, escape from this reproach of having amongst ourselves a code of laws which is "not understood of the people," and which is believed by them to be made entirely for the benefit of the members of the medical profession at the expense of the public. It is short-sighted policy on our part, I am sure, to surround with difficulties the natural wishes of our patients to resort to consultations and further advice; and the difficulties which we so often place in their way are a constant

source of distrust and dislike by them of us. The evident jealousy with which so many of us meet the caprice and disloyalty which is so natural on the part of people in distress, is another source of distrust, and again I say that the golden rule of "doing unto others as we would they should do unto us" ought to contain the whole body of medical etiquette.

In the presence of this large meeting of members of the profession of the Midland Counties, it little behoves me to speak of another cause of want of consideration on the part of the public, but I must say that the want of cohesion among ourselves, and the want of *esprit de corps*, the presence of which is so marked in many of the sister professions and the absence of which is common enough in our own, makes us of less public estimation than we deserve. Another cause is one which five years ago was so well, so eloquently, and so wisely pointed out by Sir Walter Foster in the chair from which I now speak. In that splendid address he gave on the "Political Powerlessness of the Medical Profession" he pointed out, better than I can ever do, how the want of public spirit outside of our own immediate professional avocations, has largely influenced the public estimation of us, and he counselled in more eloquent words than I possess, and he has in his own person more illustriously set the better example, and has shown how devotion to public duty does secure public esteem.

In the first part of my address I alluded to the fact of the increasing desire on the part of the masses to obtain the services of our profession for decreasing and utterly inadequate remuneration. The multiplication in our midst of certain Provident Dispensaries, and Amalgamated Clubs, and of private penny Dispensaries of all kinds, together with the abuse of the Out-patient departments of hospitals which is permitted wherever a hospital is found, have tended, and are tending, largely to reduce the legitimate rewards of our labours. It cannot be right that such vast masses of the population, who, many of them, are raised by their wages, or salaries, or earnings greatly above the level of necessity, should by combination be enabled to obtain skilled medical attendance and medicine at an average average rate per person of 3s. or 4s. per annum. The principle of co-operation and association whether applied to medicine or to any other profession which secures to the public the supply of a daily need, is obviously a good one, and is one which the medical profession at large should countenance and further, but certainly *under conditions*. The application of the principle of unlimited competition in such matters as these cannot but lead to the degradation of the profession, and to disaster to the public.

There is another point to which I should like to allude, though I

admit the difficulty there is about it. The assumption of titles with which we are not legally endowed confuses the public and leads to misunderstanding among ourselves. The subject is one of some delicacy as well as of difficulty, but it can be solved by the application of the principle of honesty, and, believe me, were this principle truly applied, the estimation in which we are held in relation to this rather small matter would greatly rise. It cannot be any more honest to assume one title of honour than it is to assume another unless in either case there is a legal right to do so. And yet many of us would hesitate before assuming a title of nobility who do not hesitate to assume titles of honour to which we have no right. The public in many cases is quite aware of this state of things, and forms its judgment accordingly.

Now these thoughts which I have laid before you lead me to make some suggestions. First, is it not possible to largely improve the preliminary education of the young members of our profession? Are we not making them to some extent one-sided, by the almost exclusive devotion which is given to the scientific side of their education to the exclusion of the more general and literary? I am one of those who still believe that a good classical education is a priceless possession, and that it in no way interferes with the subsequent development of the power of scientific observation, which necessarily lies at the root of all success in the difficult art of Medicine. In the old time, when certainly the cultivated physician was of higher social esteem than he is at the present moment, the fact that he had generally received a classical education led to his better social position. And I should like to quote to you the words of one of the older physicians on this subject:—"The point on which I presume to insist with most earnestness, is the necessity of a preliminary strict and virtuous education. Having been taught to search for truth, the mind is better prepared to look for it and to find it. To embark in an undertaking which requires so much thought as the attempt to unravel the perplexities of disease, without having learned the first principles of reasoning, can lead only to empiricism or the practising upon receipts; and when that profession is to be exercised in the very interior of domestic privacy, unless the bad propensities of our nature shall have been subdued and kept under severe habitual control by moral discipline, there will be danger perpetually of bringing the whole faculty into disrepute. Let these first principles be acquired carefully, and let the student's mind be taught to expand and enlarge itself by a knowledge of the wisdom of former ages. Let him converse with Plato, Aristotle, and Hippocrates, as Freind and Mead, and Warren, and Heberden and Sir Geo. Baker did; and let reason and the moral sense, enlightened and strengthened by religion, have gained a firm ascendancy and rule over the passions.

Let him be careful to adopt the sentiments and the manners of a gentleman, by preferring such associates as are distinguished by their elevation of mind, their sound principles, and their good manners. The latter have been classed among the minor virtues, and are better taught by example than by precept. It is indifferent to me where these acquisitions shall have been made, whether in our universities or in foreign schools; for I am not so illiberal as to conclude that nothing Attic can be taught *without* the walls of Athens. I know, however, that in our own universities, good men are to be found who are as incapable of an ignoble sentiment, as of an unbecoming demeanour; and that sound learning, such as will capacitate a man as well for the highest employments in the State as for the less ambitious pursuit of our useful profession, and the most efficient systems of moral discipline, are taught and practised. And if they must yield to the capital in the larger facilities afforded here of acquiring a familiarity with disease, and a knowledge of the practice of physic, be it so—their merit is not diminished by this consideration; for when the appetite for the knowledge that is wanted has been sharpened by the air and wholesome habits of the universities, if it does not find the food it desires there it will migrate in search of it, into whatever regions it is most likely to be found. Harvey went to Padua, Mead to Utrecht, Sir George Baker to Leyden; and those physicians of later times, who fired by the light of these brilliant examples, have endeavoured to tread in their steps, have sought, after due preliminary study, their physic in the successive schools of celebrity as they have been eminent in their turn; and so has there never been wanting a succession of learned and able men, who have been distinguished by their great attainments, and have added a dignity to our profession, which has raised it pre-eminently in England above the consideration which it obtains in any other country in the world. *Esto perpetua.*” These words of Sir Henry Hallford appear to me to be as true in the present day as they were when they were uttered, and if there is one thing which will rejoice me more than another it will be the better preliminary education of the student of medicine. With regard to professional education, so far as it goes it is a vast improvement on anything which has ever yet been done, but I hope that it may be still further improved, and this can only be done by materially lengthening the ordinary curriculum. Several of the countries of Europe, inhabited by people who are supposed to be not so progressive or intelligent as those who inhabit this island, have determined by law that five years is the shortest possible time in which to manufacture an intelligent and safe medical practitioner. If the standard of professional education is to be maintained at its present level, or is to be by imperceptible degrees raised still higher than it is at the present time, it is quite certain that the ordinary human being who has the misfortune to become a medical student, will in most cases be made by

repeated rejections to increase his term of preparation to five years ; and should this be the case, as it seems likely to be, I hope that before long that five years will be the rule and not the exception. I think too, that there is opportunity for improving the Clinical education of medical students, for when one sees the vast mass of clinical material which is running to waste in our county hospitals, and in our Union Workhouses, one is tempted to exclaim against the criminal extravagance which permits it. If we are to recover public esteem to the extent we undoubtedly deserve, we must cast away from us professional quackery, and professional dishonesty, and more than all we must cultivate a condition of things in which professional jealousy will be visited with those social penalties among ourselves, which are alone able to curb and check these very human failings. Let us also cultivate more friendly intercourse, more *esprit de corps*, and more general cohesion among ourselves. It is trite but true that the public will take us at our own estimation, and if we are perpetually quarrelling, and perpetually showing our differences, we shall be exposed perpetually to the scorn and derision of the outside world. Let our professional etiquette be simplified, and let its main principles be always the consideration of our duty towards our neighbour, and, above all things, in this matter too, let us avoid public quarrelling and public differences. I do hold most strongly with Sir Walter Foster, who says that though the excuse given to explain our absence from the duties of public life is our absorbing interest in a most laborious profession, yet it is, though a good one, more or less a species of selfishness ; that in many instances it arises from a want of independence of character ; and that until medical men will take their share, and their fair share in that which is becoming day by day more and more the duty of all good citizens, they must expect those of the citizens who do submit to the heat and burden of the work, to estimate lowly, and even to despise those who shirk it. Our colleges may largely help to enhance the public estimation of the profession at large, and they will do so when they admit the principle that they owe a duty to every member of their body which they can never fulfil so long as they remain the close, conservative bodies they now are. A large infusion of the democratic spirit into our medical corporations ; and free admission of all members and licentiates to the governing body, will alone enable these Corporations to take up and to use those duties of *discipline* and *censorship* in the exercise of which, up to the present, they have been so lamentably deficient.

There can be no doubt that the establishment of late years within our midst of so many Associations, dispensaries, and clubs, the members of which are submitted to no test whatever as to their pecuniary position or the amount of their incomes, and who yet receive in such enormous

numbers, medical attentions and medicines for preposterously inadequate sums, has led, and is leading to a lower social estimation of many of the rank and file of our body than that in which they would have found themselves otherwise. Possibly the establishment of these dispensaries and Associations has been rendered necessary by the gross abuse which has arisen in the management of the Out-patient departments of hospitals. In the hurry of seeing a large number of patients in the Out-patient room of a hospital, no physician or surgeon can be expected to take into consideration the general appearance, as to solvency or the reverse, of the patients he is called upon to treat. If such an investigation is necessary, as I believe it to be, it must be done by the administration of the hospital: but it very seldom is so done, hence, the abuse of this system, and the constant relief in hospitals of large masses of people who are perfectly able, and ought to be made by some kind of system, to relieve themselves. In hospitals we throw the onus of the remedy upon the Administration, but physicians and surgeons attached to hospitals, themselves, could do much, if they would, to remove this great blot from the hospital system. There is not quite the same excuse for men who will take appointments in connection with clubs and dispensaries, unless the excuse of "competition" is alleged. And here, I may say, that, combination among ourselves, that cultivation of *esprit de corps*, and that an acknowledgment that we are to some extent our brother's keeper, will enable us by degrees to correct this system, which appears to me to be eating out the hearts of general practitioners in large towns; and to be one fruitful source of the low estimation in which medical practitioners are held.

The practice which is common enough within the ranks of our profession of what may be called an exaggerated specialism, is one which does not enhance our reputation, or altogether improve our social position. I am aware that this is very dangerous ground to tread upon, and I am particularly desirous to avoid giving the slightest offence to those representatives among us who not only adorn the Art of Medicine, but who, by their skill and their labours, greatly enhance the sum of human happiness. But, gentlemen, we all know that there are specialists of another kind, with whose specialism there is mixed not a little quackery, and considerable dishonesty. I might speak to you of many specialisms, the restricted field of which cannot give a man an opportunity of making a sufficient income unless he does so by either inducing his patients to pay him, or himself pay them, needless visits, in order that he may apply instruments of precision, and wonderful apparatus to remote organs, or to out-of-the-way parts of the body. These dishonesties are in the long run found out by the more intelligent of the public, and

though it may be profitable, what honest man among us cares to live by practising exclusively upon the follies of the ignorant?

There is one more point concerning which I think I ought to say a few words, for I think that no one can doubt that it has had, and still has, a great influence on the social position of our profession. The attitude of the profession as a whole to those who choose to practise special systems, and to label themselves with distinctive designations, has led a certain section of the public to take an unfavourable view of our position with regard to them. The correspondence which has lately appeared in the *Times* under the heading "Odium Medicum," has not, I think, enhanced the position of our profession in the eyes of the more intelligent of the public. I am not here to make the slightest excuse for the practitioners of homœopathy, nor do I wish to defend in any way the position which the practitioners of that system have chosen to take up, but I submit that though "hard words break no bones," wholesale insinuations of ineapacity or fraud, do not, and cannot redound to the credit of our profession at large. I deplore most sincerely the discussion of such matters in the public newspapers, and I earnestly hope that no medical man who respects himself, will condescend to an anonymous correspondence, however telling and witty it may be, even though the columns of the *Times* are open to him.

And now, gentlemen, having spent, as I think, a sufficient time in endeavouring, however feebly, to show how we ourselves may improve our social position, and perhaps do some little to wipe off the slur cast upon us by a poet in our own ranks when he wrote these lines

"Like a port sculler one physician plies,
And all his arts and all his skill he tries;
But two physicians, like a pair of oars,
Will waft you swifter to the Stygian shores"——

I should like to utilise the remainder of the time at my disposal in quoting first of all some of the opinions which have been uttered by various great minds as to the future of our profession; and in pointing out how we ourselves may hope yet to see a vast improvement in it. The profession of medicine may not be appreciated as it should be politically, socially, or commercially; it may not be recognized by the State in the shape of State rewards, and this may be some reason why it is not appreciated as it should be by the public. It has been pointed out over and over again that there is no item in the expenditure of a household more grudgingly bestowed, and more liable to be questioned and more tardily settled, than the doctor's bill. One of our greatest statesmen has said: "Your profession has a great future before it, and I believe that in one generation, or at most two, it will be far in advance of the other learned professions." Lord Bacon said of the pursuit of knowledge that "it is not a couch whereon to rest a searching and a

restless spirit," or "a terrace for a wandering and fiery mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect," or "a tower of State for a proud mind to raise itself up," or "a fort and commanding ground for strife or contention," or "a shop for profit or sale," but it is a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator, and for the relief of man's estate. Thomas Carlyle has said: "I have often said what profession is there equal in true nobleness to medicine? He that can abolish pain, and relieve his fellow mortal from sickness, he is indisputably the usefulest of men. Him, savage and civilized will honour; he is in the right, be in the wrong who may. As a Lord Chancellor, under one's horse hair wig there must be misgivings; still more as a Lord Primate under one's cauliflower; but if I could heal disease, I would say to all men and to angels '*en' ecce*.'" Another living celebrity has said: "When we regard the rapid and marked progress which our art and science has made during little more than half a century, I feel that we are fully justified in believing that progress in the future will be even more remarkable, and that with materials for investigation in abundance, with willing and able workers, there can be neither fear nor doubt for the continued advance of the healing art."

Taking a true view of our profession, there is every reason to believe that its progress will be rapid, and that the estimation in which it will eventually be held, will be almost beyond conception; that it will become the true priesthood of men; and that it will aid with other teachers in pointing out to man that the cause of his miseries is his own ignorance, and the wilful breaking of those inexorable laws which rule and guide the universe, and that his future is in his own hands, and can only be spoilt by his own faults. Let us all set before us a high and noble standard, and remember that one of our own body has said that "the end of life is *to be*, and not *to get*." Let those of us who are teachers, teach always up to noble ends and purposes, discarding all ignoble thoughts of mere utilitarianism, or of what will pay. Let those of us who are practitioners of whatever grade, remember that Hippocratic oath which was the standard of ancient times, and may yet be taken to be the standard of modern times, if we add to it those graces which may be considered to belong to a Christian gentleman. This Hippocratic oath is probably known to all of you, but I will take leave to quote it:—"I swear by Apollo the physician, and Æsculapius, and Health, and All-heal, and all the gods and goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this oath and this stipulation—to reckon him who taught me this Art, equally dear to me as my parents, to share my substance with him, and relieve his necessities if required, to look upon his offspring in the same footing as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they shall wish to learn it, without fee or stipulation; and that by precept, lecture, and every other mode of instruc-

tion, I will impart a knowledge of the Art to my own sons, and those of my teachers, and to disciples bound by a stipulation and oath according to the law of medicine, but to none others. I will follow that system of regimen which according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion. With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practise my Art. I will not cut persons labouring under the stone, but will leave this to be done by men who are practitioners of this work. Into whatever houses I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick, and will abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption; and further, from the seduction of females or males, of freemen and slaves. Whatever, in connection with my professional practice, or not in connection with it, I see or hear in the life of men, which ought not to be spoken of abroad, I will not divulge, as reckoning that all such should be kept secret. While I continue to keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all men in all times! But should I trespass and violate this Oath, may the reverse be my lot!"

This which was the standard of professional ethics among our ancient Grecian brethren, may even yet furnish us with a standard for ourselves, but let us further add to it the main principles of that more noble system of morality, which, taught by the Divine Son of the carpenter on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, eighteen centuries ago, has been the guide, the solace, and the light of nearly all the great minds in our profession since. If we take these principles, and those enunciated by Hippocrates, the father of our art, if we remain but true to ourselves, then shall be seen that honouring of the physician which the Preacher of old recommends to us in the words, "Honour a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which ye may have of him; for the Lord hath created him, for from the Most High cometh healing; and he shall receive honour of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head, and in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration." And this honour, I venture to prophesy, will be the distinguishing mark of our profession in the future, due alike to its education, to its high character, to its unstained charity, to its usefulness, and to its knowledge.